UNRWA had to restrict the distribution of NFIs to Palestine Refugees who continued to face mobility restrictions in UNRWA assisted 31,000 Palestine refugees with in kind non-food items. Due to the limited funding available, of Palestine refugees were displaced at Emergency Appeal per cent (until April) by introducing remote working approaches.

Pre-conception care, and the decongesting UNRWA offices to 50 implementation of an emergency triage system in all clinics that requires gatherings like trainings and awareness sessions limited

The Syria Field Office had to work through adjusted COVID-19 measures, which may have contributed to the remarkable success rate. Schools were closed in April as per the Ministry of Education’s decision except for the 9th grade students. They received support classes in early June 2021, taking into account of the necessary preventative COVID-19 measures, which may have contributed to the remarkable success rate.

UNRWA in action

Ninety-year-old Kadraa al-Mawed, a returnee to Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp on the outskirts of Damascus, receives some medical attention from an UNRWA medical worker at the UNRWA mobile clinic. Khadraa is the oldest member of the approximately 430 families currently living in the camp. Many of them returned because they cannot afford increasing rents anymore. Living conditions inside Yarmouk are however still incredibly difficult, with no services available until very recently.

UNRWA, is making an effort to offer services to particularly vulnerable persons to resume essential primary health care and disease prevention in Yarmouk. A mobile health clinic – one of the Agency’s 25 primary health-care facilities across Syria - is visiting the camp every Wednesday to provide services from the yard of one of the destroyed UNRWA schools. In addition to the important role the clinic plays, UNRWA conducts awareness-raising and explaining preventative measures to avoid the spread of COVID19 in the camp.

COVID-19 update

The COVID-19 situation continued to fluctuate in the first half of the year. There was a surge in new COVID-19 cases in March with average of 160 daily cases and an average of 147 daily cases in April.

The surge in cases, around March 2021 prompted the Ministry of Education to close schools for summer from 4 April 2021 to 5 September 2021. The closure of schools exposed more children to protection risks like playing in the streets as well as begging.

The Syria Field Office had to work through adjusted COVID-19 protocols to reduce the risk of infections as follows: activities that requires gatherings like trainings and awareness sessions limited to a maximum of 12 people, for a maximum of three hours, implementation of an emergency triage system in all clinics that include suspension of non-critical health services like pre-conception care, and the decongesting UNRWA offices to 50 per cent (until April) by introducing remote working approaches.

The first half of 2021 witnessed a significant deterioration of economic situation in the country with rising cost of goods and services, fuel shortages and depreciation of Syrian Pound, is negatively affecting the living conditions of Palestine Refugees. Data from a recent crisis monitoring survey in Syria shows rising poverty levels in the country, thereby increasing the caseload of vulnerable Palestine Refugees requiring support. The first round of blanket food assistance started on 19 April 2021. Due to the critical socio-economic conditions, the food assistance will be provided to all vulnerable Palestine refugees eligible for assistance. In June 2021, the national average price of a standard reference food basket of WFP reached to SYP 165,932. This was 49 per cent higher than that of December 2020 (six months ago) and was 102 per cent higher compared to June 2020.

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